Valentyna Marchenko
PhD, Associate Professor
National Technical University of Ukraine
"Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute"
Kyiv, Ukraine
ORCID ID 0000-0002-9291-471X
seonolut@gmail.com

Yevhenii Minenko
Master student
National Technical University of Ukraine
"Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute"
Kyiv, Ukraine
eminen40@gmail.com

LINGUISTIC AND EXTRALINGUISTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF TED TALKS AS MULTIMODAL ENGLISH TEXT

Abstract. The article focuses on the investigation of such linguistic phenomenon as multimodality, namely its linguistic and extralinguistic features in TED Talks. TED Talks is a conference where influential people speak to the audience about important issues that need to be addressed in our society. Speakers of the conference perform a role of ideators who are trying to get their ideas across to the people in the audience. To fulfill their objectives, they resort to different techniques implementing all kind of linguistic and extralinguistic means in their strategies of drawing public attention. To realizing a full potential of a performance on stage, speaker needs to be fully prepared, which means making a presentation, a speech and thinking about their actions on stage in advance. Duration of a TED Talk usually varies from 10 to 15 minutes, which is motivated by people's generally short attention span. The article is based on D. M. Kaysina's classification of rhetorical strategies that are realized in TED Talks. This classification helps us understand the basics of linguistic means which play a large part in forming a communicative intention. As well as how different parts of the sentence can be combined to create the synergy needed. Understanding the principles play a key role in oral presentation and helps us better understand how language works.

Keywords: ideation speech; ideator; linguistic and extralinguistic means; manipulation; multimodality; TED Talks.

1. INTRODUCTION

It is well known that we as individuals perceive the material world through five channels of sensation such as: visual, auditory, and olfactory (taste and smell), proprioceptive (sense of balance/body position), tactile. We can define those senses as modal. Thus, modality is a characteristic of human feelings in quality (Kolegaieva, 2015). Speech as a secondary system transforms the signs of reality which we perceive through the polymodality of sensations into speech signs.

The entities with combined linguistic and extralinguistic means have been named diffrently, for instance: polycode text (Eiger & Yucht), creolized text (Knorozov, Ivanov), multichannel text (Ishchuk), linguistic complex (Bolshiianov), etc. However, thanks to researchers such as Gibbons and Javis, the term "multimodality" has become widely used as the definition of integrated functioning of linguistic and extralinguistic means of communication.

A perfect example of multimodal texts are TED Talks lectures, which incorporate linguistic and extralinguistic modes (e.g., gesture, body language, voice quality, intonation, visuals, and videos). TED Talks is a conference organized by TED (technology, entertainment, design). TED posts talks online for free distribution under the slogan "ideas worth spreading". TED conference is one of the major platforms for delivering important ideas to recipients. Starting in 1984, they have managed to create a breakthrough in public speaking in a short period of time. TED Talks are rich in a variety of multimodal means that never cease to amaze a viewer. With the development of

language and technology, the number of linguistic and extralinguistic means of information transmission has increased. This makes further study of multimodality, particularly multimodality of TED Talks, a very important issue.

The main purpose of this paper is to identify the features of the TED Talks as an English-language multimodal text by studying its linguistic and non-linguistic characteristics.

2. METHODS

To achieve the goal, several methods were used, namely: analysis (used to dissect the subject of knowledge, abstraction of certain aspects or aspects), analogy (used to assimilate forms), comparison (used to compare certain language units to identify their features), systematization (used to classify and organize the process), concretization (used to determine certain relationships between the conditions of existence and the form of grammatical constructions), distribution (used to identify individual units), semantic method (used to determine the meanings of language units).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
3.1. Pragmatic Potential of TED Talks: Strategies and Tactics of Manipulative Influence

Further research of the phenomenon of multimodality in TED Talks requires an accurate definition of pragmatic factors of TED Talks, definition of manipulative strategies, tactics and strategies of presentation of information by linguistic and extralinguistic means, and also revealing of communicative tactics.

Communicative influence is understood as any communication in the aspect of its target conditionality: in any communication communicators try to achieve certain social goals, which, ultimately, are aimed at regulation of behavior (Bezmenova & Belianin, 1990).

The TED Talks' overall viewing rating is constantly growing, and as the audience grows, so do the opportunities to influence people's perspectives. There are various means of influencing the audience and year by year it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish manipulation from the spread of useful ideas (ideations).

Manipulative communication strategy is interpreted, within the framework of political communication, as the power that is forcibly exercised over the addressee (Issers, 2011). Its clarifying features include: 1) secrecy, 2) targeted guidance to arouse human intentions that do not meet his or her wishes, 3) creating the illusion of independence, and 4) the benefits of manipulation for its subject (Baikov, 1988).

In contrast to manipulation, ideational communicative influence is aimed at drawing the recipients' attention to a certain urgent problem, substantiating the idea of its solution, convincing the recipients of the value of such idea and encouraging its implementation in social practice. Ideational communicative influence is determined by its separation from manipulation and propaganda.

Although propaganda is not one of a secret means of influence, it also differs from ideation because it has an aggressive, offensive, open nature (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999). The main objectives of propaganda are the dissemination of certain public opinions, the desire to influence the recipient, to force him to accept the proposed point of view or concept, the excitation of the recipient to act in accordance with the institutions that are put forward (Voitasik, 2001). In this context, the attitude should be understood as formed under the influence of propaganda, education and experience relatively stable organization of knowledge, feelings and motives, which causes a certain attitude to ideological, political and social phenomena of the environment (Voitasik, 2001). The sources of propaganda are organizations or institutions that determine and direct the content of propaganda (Skovorodnikov, 2004, p. 227, 253–260). From this we can conclude that although propaganda has no hidden signs of influence, but like manipulation, propaganda differs from ideation by its "origin". The propagandist aims to pursue goals that benefit the institution, and, accordingly, benefits from the successful implementation of these goals. In addition, the propagandist has institutional sources of information for the implementation of communicative influence. It should be emphasized that both manipulation and propaganda are types of

communicative influence but not its methods.

The main difference between ideation and manipulation is that ideation does not imply the concealment of true communicative intentions, the implementation of which would be contrary to the desires and needs of recipients. In contrast to the hidden intentions of the subjects of manipulative communicative action, the global communicative intention of the subjects of ideational speech is explicitly formulated on the Internet platform TED – ideas worth spreading for society to implement them.

3.2. Linguistic Characteristics of TED Talks

In order to influence the audience and to evoke certain emotions in people, the speaker must choose a strategy of their rhetoric and use certain language means to implement it. Thus, the speaker uses tools of different levels of speech, such as phonetic, lexical, grammatical and syntactic. We will further discuss the various rhetorical strategies of influence analyzed and singled out on the basis of TED Talks.

According to the classification of Kaisina (2018), there are such rhetorical strategies as:
- *clarification strategy;*
- *story-telling strategy;*
- *description strategy;*
- *proof strategy;*

Clarification strategy. A rational strategy of explanation is inherent in a serious tone, but it can also be realized in a humorous one. At the same time, fragments of explanation in a humorous tone are usually interspersed with the speech of the speaker of a serious tone. A similar example of "switching" to a humorous tone can be found at the beginning of Michael Stevens' speech:

What is the best kind of cheese to use to catch a bear? Someone knows over here. Obviously the answer is Camembert. (Laughter) *Camembert! Camembert! Okay. Thank you. I have a head full of cheese puns but I was told I have to keep it brief.* (Laughter) *What did the piece of cheese say when it looked into the mirror?* (Audience: Cheese) *No. It said, hello me, hello me.* (Laughter) *What can I say guys I love a good pun.* **Why,** *I don't know because puns are funny, right?* **Why?** *Well, because there's a bit of a surprise factor. You know, you feel outsmarted for a second until you get the double meaning.* **Why?** *I don't – because that's the way language works. Okay. I did what these slides are doing.* <u>*They are playing the why game, right, where you just keep asking why, why but why after everything someone says.*</u> *Kids do it all of the time and* <u>*adults should do it more often.*</u> *I'm just kidding.* <u>*Don't, it's annoying*</u> (Laughter) (Michael "Vsauce" Stevens).

Explaining to the audience "*Why do we ask questions?*" founder of a famous YouTube channel "Vsauce" Michael decided to kick off his Ted Talk with some puns to draw public attention. This is a very affective move since when you have attention of the audience you can "switch" to a serious tone. Michael realized this strategy brilliantly. He states his personal opinion about puns. However, then he starts to ask himself a series of rhetorical question, so called "*Why game*". The question *"why?"* can be asked infinitely. This is quite common among kids because they are always curious about the things around them and they are trying to explore the world. Everyone in the audience accepts it as a universal truth. But they do not expect when the speaker say "*and adults should do it more often*" in a serious tone. Giving a few seconds for people in the audience to process what he said Michael "switches" back to a humorous tone saying "*Don't, it's annoying*" and admitting that he was kidding. This is especially funny because people in the audience came to hear the speaker's speech about why people ask questions. Having received the recommendation not to ask a question "*why*" the audience immediately understands the incoherence of the toping of the speech and breaks into laugher. This even happens with or without the realization of the context by the audience.

Changing the tone of ideational speech from serious to humorous allows the speaker at the beginning of his speech to imply the prevalence of the problem.

Laughter can contribute to the creation of a positive image of the speaker, strengthening their authority (Vezhbitskaia, 1997, p. 111). A humorous tone can also be used as a great way to make a

certain situation less tense. As during the speech of Sam Berns where he explains his philosophy of a happy life:

I surround myself with people that I want to be with, and I keep moving forward. So with this philosophy, I hope that all of you, regardless of your obstacles, can have a very happy life as well. <u>Oh, wait, hang on a second, one more piece of advice</u> – (Laughter) ***Never miss a party if you can help it****. My school's homecoming dance is tomorrow night, and I will be there. Thank you very much.* (Applause) (Sam Berns).

Sam Berns has a rare disease called Progeria. The effects of this disease are tight skin, lack of weight gain, stunted growth, and heart disease. Despite his disease Sam is an optimistic person. Throughout his speech he outlined three major aspects to his philosophy of happy life. The whole speech was focused on the importance of finding silver lining regardless of difficulty of the situation. Sam spoke about his achievements and adversities he had to overcome because of the disease. People in the audience were listening attentively and were applauding during the speech. This was a perfect situation not only to change a tone of the speech but to bring another positive note to it as well. At the end of his speech Sam added a fourth aspect "*Never miss a party if you can help it*". The audience didn't foresee such a move and because of that they laughed. As we can see changing tones can be affective not only at the beginning but also at the end of a speech.

Story-telling strategy. In the next TED Talk Scott Mescudi also known as Kid Cudi talks about his pursuit of success. Kid Cudi is a world known hip-hop artist. His influence on music industry became undeniable after this debut project "A Kid Named Cudi". So it goes without saying that he had a great deal of respect coming up to this speech. Kid Cudi tells the audience about his story from the beginning. And even though he is known for his lyricism he uses some of the most standard words and word repetitions in his speech such as *I'm like*, *And you know*, *And me just being like* etc., but it doesn't discredit his talent. Contrarily it creates a sense of friendliness and openness with the people in the audience. The speaker uses some other regular story-telling phrases such as *I remember*, *and*, *it was* and etc. By these words we understand that the story is being told. Here is the example from Cudi's speech:

*And when I moved away when **I was** 20 years old, my mom was extremely sad – where's my mom at? Yeah. She was crying. Hey Mommy. My first big fan was my mom. **And, it was** really interesting, **I remember** leaving home, and she's giving me a hug at the airport, and she leans and she goes: "<u>You can always come back around, you can go right back home, you can change your mind, everything will be fine.</u>" **I'm like**: "<u>No, I'm going, this is happening.</u>" **And you know**, walk into security and then looking back and just seeing her like: "<u>Ohhh...</u>" **And me just being like**: "<u>Errr…</u>"* (Laughter) (Scott Mescudi).

Cudi talks about how after graduation from college he was moving from his hometown to a much bigger city New York. Because he was giving this speech in his hometown and his mom was in the audience, Cudi decided to recall the moment went he was leaving and his mom was seeing him off. He used a form of dialogue to tell this story how his mother was sad about him leaving '*You can always come back around, you can go right back home, you can change your mind, everything will be fine".* But Cudi showed his confidence at the time saying "*No, I'm going, this is happening*". Then he proceeds even farther with mimicking emotion, voice and gesture of him mother with '*Ohhh...*" and his own emotions of holding down tears with "*Errr…".* People start to laugh and this showcases the success of Cudi's efforts to tell a story. Who knows, maybe if he listened to his mom and stayed in his hometown we would not be able to found out about this kid, named Cudi.

Description strategy. While a humorous tone is usually used to draw people's attention and it can be implied in any rhetorical strategy, a serious tone is a typical characteristic of description strategy. This usually happens because while we are describing something to someone we consciously or subconsciously are trying to get our point across to somebody. Here is an example from Sir Ken Robinson's speech "Do schools kill creativity?":

What these things have in common is that kids will take a chance. If they don't know, they'll have a go. Am I right? They're not frightened of being wrong. I don't mean to say that being wrong

is the same thing as being creative. What we do know is, <u>if you're not prepared to be wrong, you'll never come up with anything original</u> -- if you're not prepared to be wrong. And by the time they get to be adults, <u>most kids have lost that capacity</u>. They have become frightened of being wrong. And we run our companies like this. We stigmatize mistakes. And we're now running national education systems where mistakes are the worst thing you can make. And the result is that we are educating people out of their creative capacities (Sir Ken Robinson).

During his speech, the speaker, Sir Ken Robinson uses creativity of kids as an example of not being scared to be wrong. The speaker gives the audience several examples from his experience when children said something ridiculous but they never got embarrassed because they didn't know whether they were right of wrong. This gives them an opportunity to show some extraordinary ways of dealing this problems. With this being said Sir Robinson describes his view of the problem of creativity which is seen as a correct description.

Proof strategy. Proof strategy is similar description strategy but it is more straightforward and it tends to have a large amount of information which helps the speaker to prove their points. It is often used in a combination of linguistic and extralinguistic means such as speech and visual presentation of data on the screen. In the following fragment of the ideational speech this combination helps to prove a certain point:

*But this is just **one, two, three billion people**, and obviously, there are **seven billion people** in the world, so <u>there must be one, two, three, four billion people more</u> who live in between the poverty and the air line. They have electricity, but the question is: How many have washing machines? <u>I've done the scrutiny of market data</u>, and I've found that, indeed, the washing machine has penetrated below the air line, and today, there's **an additional one billion people** out there who live above the "wash line"* (Laughter) (Hans Rosling).

Hans Rosling delivers a speech about the magic of washing machine. He starts off by telling the story about how washing machine appeared in his home for the first time. It was a very unusual thing and his mom and dad have been saving money for years just to afford one. Then he proceeds to tell how his grandma was even more excited to see how this machine works. The speaker mentions how nowadays people use so many machines in their households that they easily forget about the fact that they were there forever. Hans states that there are still a lot of people who heat water on fire and live below the poverty line. He shows a statistics that at the time of filming this Ted Talk (2011) there were 2 billion people who lived on less than 2$ a day, the richest people (one billion) who spend more than 80$ a day on their consumption and 4 billion people who stay in between and have electricity. Hans wanted to know how many people in the world own washing machine. He has done a research and found out that there were 2 billion people who own washing machine. Hans stresses the fact how hard and time-consuming it is to wash clothes by hand and there were still 5 billion people who did so. Obviously those people didn't want to do such work because it has a relatively low productivity. Hans says that it is of a bare necessary to have washing machine. Then he brings up another statistics about energy use. He predicts that in the future the energy consumption will almost double and since climate change is real we should be more energy efficient and we must produce green energy in order to make chance by 2050. But what is the magic behind washing machine? It does the laundry as simple as it is. Now that it does the laundry people have more time to use for themselves and instead of wasting time on washing, they can read books and develop themselves all thanks to industrialization and new technology it brought for all of us. By analyzing and giving the audience straight facts the speaker perfectly realized the proof strategy.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The research performed shows that multimodality plays a key role in interaction. Using examples from some of the best performances of TED Talks we found out that by understanding simple concepts we can influence public's reaction to what is being said. Comprehension of this brings us closer to reaching our communicative goals. Classification of rhetorical strategies defined by D. M. Kaysina helps us better understand and distinguish linguistic and extralinguistic characteristics of TED Talks, as well as it helps us to structure our analysis. Multimodality is a key

component of communication in any area of life. That is why further elaboration of this subject is of a great importance.

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Валентина Марченко, Євгеній Міненко. Мовні та позамовні характеристики TED-лекції як англомовного мультимодального тексту. Ця стаття присвячена дослідженню такого мовного явища як мультимодальність, а саме його мовних та позамовних особливостей у TED-лекціях. TED-лекції – це конференції, на якій впливові люди говорять перед аудиторією про важливі проблеми нашого суспільства, які потребують вирішення. Спікери конференції виконують роль ідеаторів, які намагаються донести свої ідеї до людей у аудиторії. Для виконання своїх цілей вони вдаються до різних технік, що реалізують усілякі мовні та позамовні особливості у стратегіях привернення уваги громадськості. Щоб реалізувати повний потенціал виступу на сцені, оратору потрібно бути повністю підготовленим, це означає, що йому потрібно підготувати презентацію, виступ та подумати свої дії на сцені. Тривалість однієї TED-лекції зазвичай коливається в межах від 10 до 15 хвилин. І це адекватна тривалість через обмежену тривалість концентрації уваги людей. У статті на основі класифікації риторичних стратегій Д. М. Кайсіної розглянуто їхню реалізацію на прикладі виступів спікерів на TED-лекціях. Виокремлено основні мовні засоби, що відіграють велику роль у формуванні та реалізації комунікативного наміру.

Ключові слова: ідеатор; ідеаційна промова; мовні та позамовні засоби; маніпуляція; мультимодальність; TED-лекція.